

Board of Pharmacy

consumer**brief**

The Board of Pharmacy, the oldest professional licensing board in New Jersey, was established in 1877 to protect the public by regulating the dispensing of prescription medications.

The Board of Pharmacy consists of 11 members appointed by the Governor. Eight (8) are registered pharmacists, two (2) are members of the general public and one (1) is a State government member.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOARD IS TO:

- protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of New Jersey; and to
- regulate the practice of pharmacies and pharmacists.

HOW DOES THE BOARD ACCOMPLISH ITS PURPOSE?

The Board protects the public:

- by making sure that all pharmacists have met all necessary requirements for licensure;
- by investigating and prosecuting pharmacists who have broken the State's consumer protection laws;
- by requiring all pharmacists to continue their professional education and training to keep current with the evolving world of pharmacy;
- by requiring that all pharmacies be registered by the State and renew their permits annually; and
- by ensuring patients receive the prescribed medication.

WHAT DOES MY PHARMACIST DO FOR ME?

Your pharmacist is required to counsel you about

medications your doctor has prescribed. The pharmacist is required by law to maintain a patient profile on all customers. The profile enables your pharmacist to identify medications that you are currently taking when a new prescription is filled. The patient profile enables the pharmacist to determine whether there could be a negative interaction between new medication and other drugs being taken based on a patient's allergies. Your profile also helps your pharmacist guard against possible misuse of the new prescription. Your patient profile consists of the following information:

- your family name and first name;
- your address and telephone number;
- your age and gender;
- the original date or refill date the medication was dispensed;
- the number identifying the prescription;
- the name, strength and quantity of the drug dispensed; and
- the pharmacist's comments relevant to your drug therapy including whether or not you accepted the pharmacist's offer to counsel. The pharmacist



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will also record if you have any allergies or medical conditions which may affect the drug's intended results.

Every time you receive a NEW prescription, your pharmacist is required by law to make a reasonable effort to provide counseling. Counseling may include the following:

- the name of the medication;
- how and when to take the medication;
- any common side effects;
- possible interactions with any other medications you may be taking; and
- proper storage of your medication.

BEFORE LEAVING YOUR PHARMACIST'S COUNTER BE SURE YOU KNOW:

- the name of the medication, popular brand and/or comparable substitute;
- how and when your medication should be taken, and for how long;
- whether there are restrictions relating to food, drink, or other medicines; and
- what should be done if a dose is missed.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A CONSUMER IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT AGAINST A PHARMACIST?

Every consumer has a right to file a complaint against a pharmacy and/or a pharmacist.

Complaints may be filed by contacting the:

Board of Pharmacy
124 Halsey Street
P.O. Box 45013
Newark, N.J. 07101
973-504-6450

HOW ARE COMPLAINTS RESOLVED?

If the complaint is within the Board's jurisdiction:

- the complaint may be referred to an investigator who will contact you for additional information about the complaint (if the complaint is not within the Board's jurisdiction, it will be referred to the appropriate agency);
- the pharmacist or pharmacy will be asked to respond to your concerns; and

- the Board will then evaluate the complaint and the practitioner's response to determine if the complaint involves a violation of New Jersey's Pharmacy Law.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- If a violation did occur, the Board may issue a reprimand, revoke the permit of a pharmacy or suspend or revoke the license of a pharmacist.
- During disciplinary proceedings, licensees may be represented by an attorney and are given the right to demonstrate their compliance with the law. Once the Board has taken action against the licensee, he or she has the right to appeal the action.
- You will be notified in writing concerning the outcome of the complaint.

CONSUMER TIPS

1. Remember to tell your pharmacist about any over-the-counter medications as well any prescription drugs you may currently be taking. Also, discuss any drug sensitivities or allergies you might have.
2. Ask the doctor for the name of the medication being prescribed, the potential side effects, directions and any special instructions. Also, ask if there is an acceptable, less expensive generic medication that you can take.
3. Always read all of the labels on medications before taking them and follow the directions. Patients have been harmed in the past because they did not follow the directions on their prescriptions.
4. Never take medications from a "friend" who believes he or she has the same problem that you have - this could be dangerous.
5. If a medication does not agree with you, call your physician immediately.
6. Make sure the label on the bag and the bottle of medication match. Sometimes the wrong medication gets put into the wrong bag.
7. If you experience a side effect or unusual reaction upon taking a medication, immediately call your prescriber. If the prescriber is unavailable, call 911 for medical assistance.

If you have any questions, you may contact the Board by telephone at 800-242-5846 or 973-504-6450.

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